

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 8, 2010

President Barack Obama
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to thank you for your support of Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) aid to low-income families and urge you to release the contingency resources as soon as possible to address the needs of families and seniors who are struggling in the current economic crisis. The recently-passed Consolidated Appropriations Act includes \$5.1 billion for LIHEAP—the highest funding level in the history of the program—of which more than \$590 million is dedicated to LIHEAP contingency funding. We urge you to release these resources as soon as possible and we ask that you dedicate sufficient funds for this program in your fiscal year 2011 budget request.

More families are in need of and receiving LIHEAP benefits than ever before. According to the National Energy Assistance Directors Association (NEADA), states assisted more than 8 million households last year, nearly a one-third increase over fiscal year 2008. Furthermore, NEADA anticipates a 20 percent increase in LIHEAP applications this year. Even at the record appropriations levels passed by Congress in the last two years, demand for LIHEAP assistance continues to exceed funding.

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981 instructs that the LIHEAP contingency fund be used to assist the *“needs of one or more States arising from a natural disaster or other emergency.”* The law states that economic conditions, such as increased unemployment and layoffs, as well as increased participation in public benefits such as food stamps, merit the release of LIHEAP contingency funds. Clearly these conditions have been met. The most recent USDA food stamp data indicates that a record 37 million people – approximately one in eight Americans – received food stamps in September. Moreover, many states have experienced unemployment rates that have exceeded the national average for several months. In releasing these funds, we urge you to give consideration to targeting assistance based on economic conditions, as well as extreme weather events.

Releasing emergency LIHEAP funding – supplementing block grant funding already being spent in every state – will help thousands of families and seniors with their energy bills and, in doing so, create a noticeable economic multiplier. Less burdened by energy bills, these low-income families have more to spend on other essentials, and can avoid the choice between paying energy bills and putting food on their table.

Due to the clear economic benefit and demonstrated need, we also urge you to include full funding for LIHEAP in your fiscal year 2011 budget request, the same level that Congress has provided over the last two years.

For many years, LIHEAP has been a vital safety net for low-income families and seniors. In these tough economic times, the program is more important than ever. As such, we respectfully request

that you release LIHEAP funding to meet the immediate emergency needs, and we urge you to maintain the federal commitment to low-income energy assistance.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

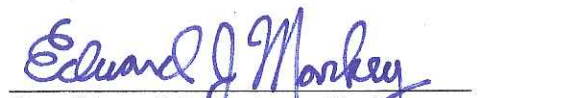
Sincerely,



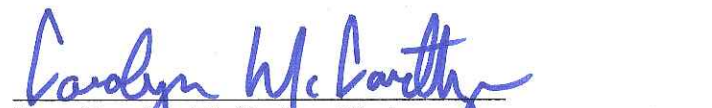
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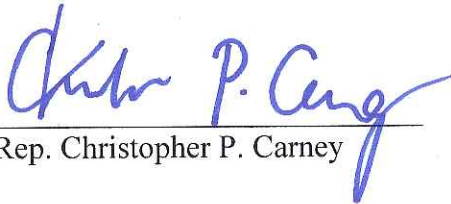
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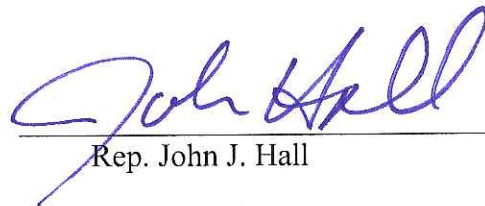
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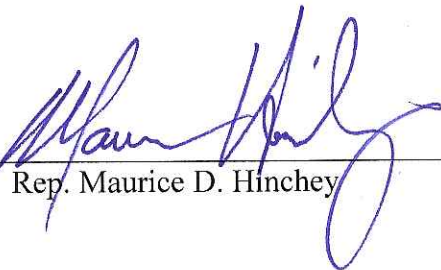
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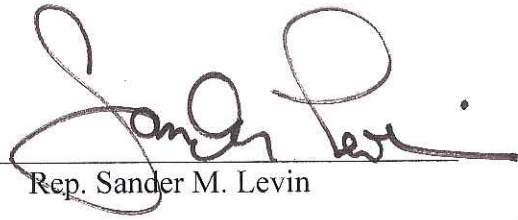
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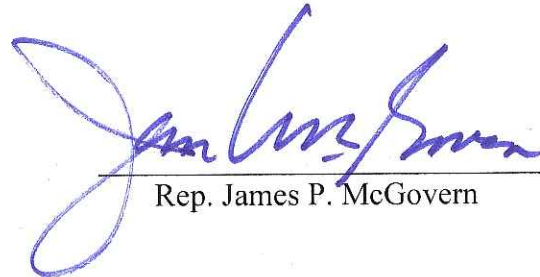
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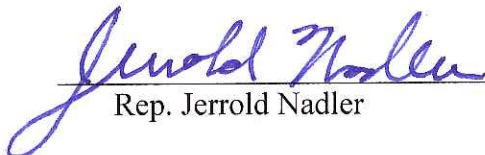
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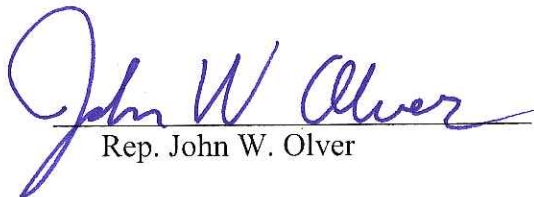
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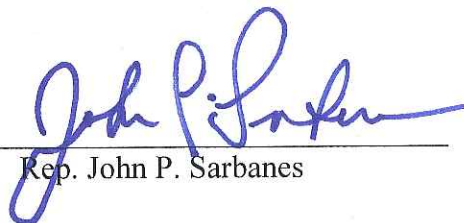
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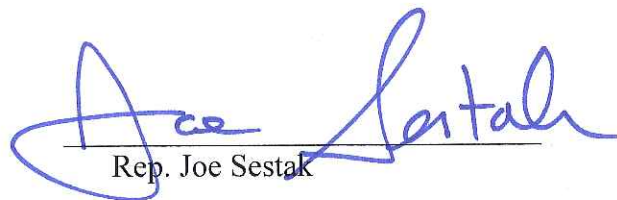
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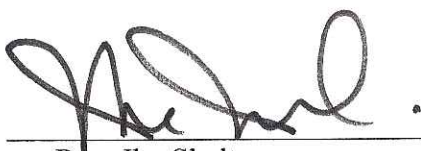
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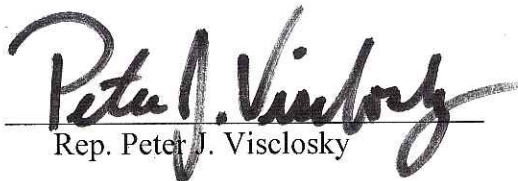
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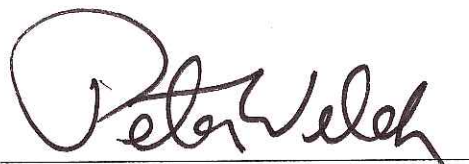
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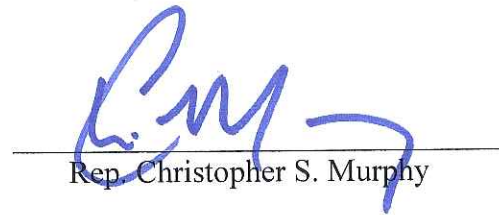



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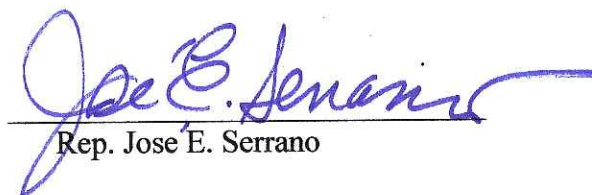

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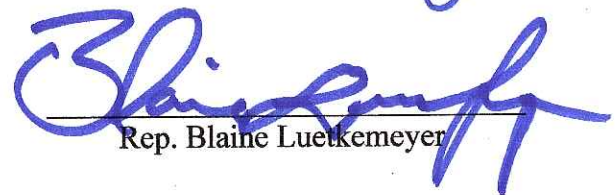

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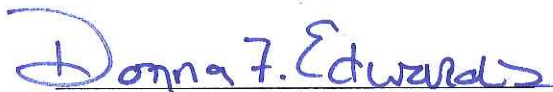
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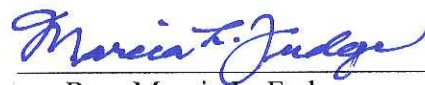
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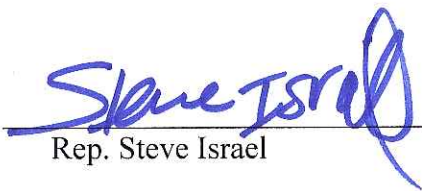
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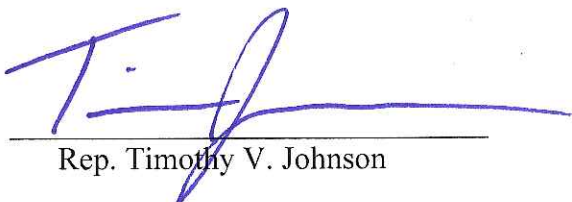
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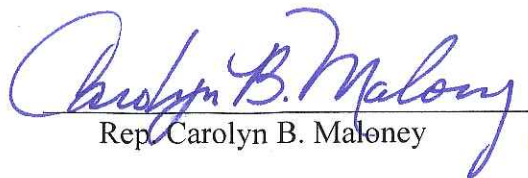


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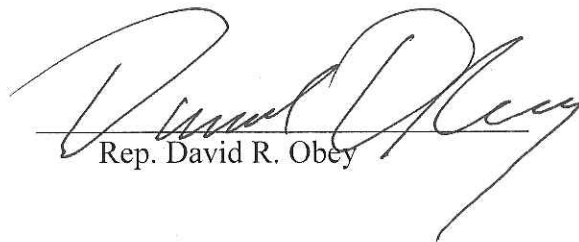


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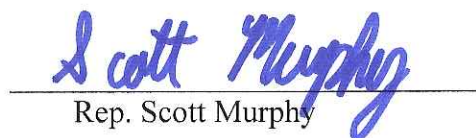

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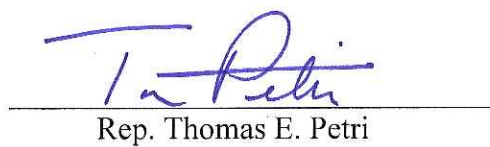

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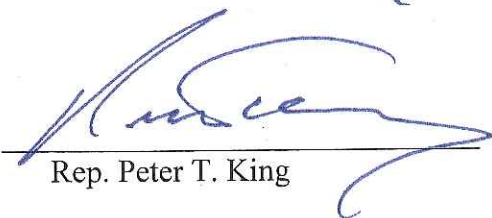
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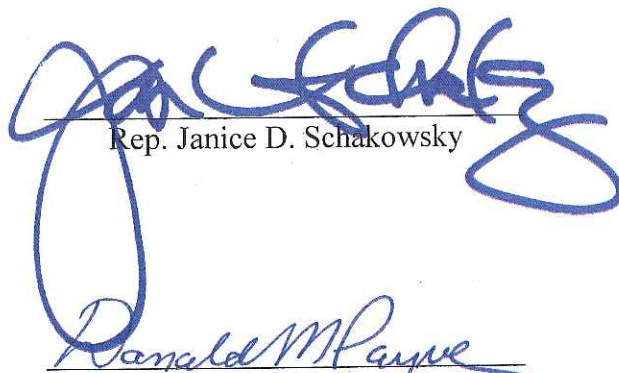
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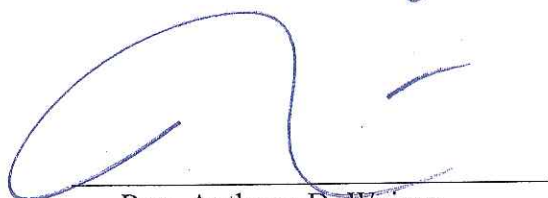
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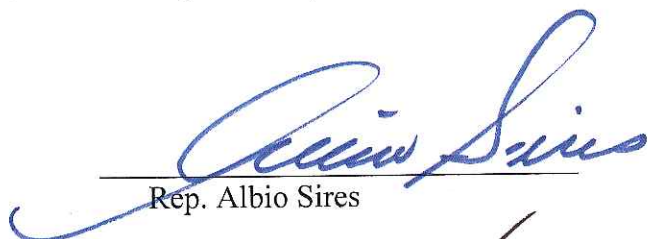
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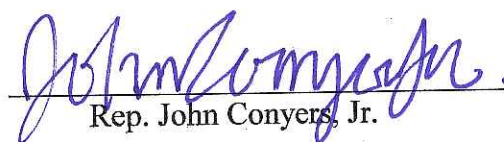
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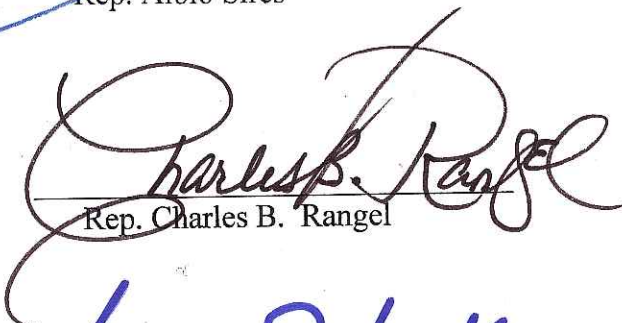
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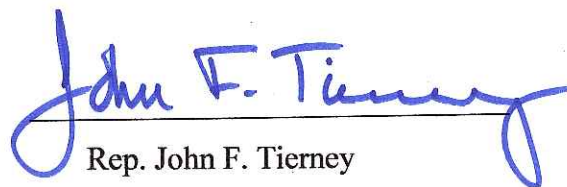
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